

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

Figures 3 and 5 were amended to include additional reference numerals.

These drawings replace the previously filed drawings. No new matter has been added

REMARKS

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the detailed remarks. Claims 1-17 and 23-26 have been canceled, Claims 1-26 have been cancelled. New claims 27-37 are presented. Accordingly, claims 27-37 are pending.

Claims 1-9 and 11-26 were previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over WO 99/54157 in view of *Szukay et al* (4,818,166). Claims 2, 4, 5, 9-11, and 20-22 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over WO 99/54157 in view of *Szukay et al*. Although the rejected claims have been canceled it should be noted that the new claims recite further features of the ring which are neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited references and are thus properly allowable over all the prior rejections.


Applicant claims a specific geometry of the crimp ring which is neither disclosed nor suggested by the above references or the Japanese references presented in the Supplemental IDS. Please note that the crimp rings disclosed by the Japanese references include rectilinear inner perimeters which are adjacent semi-circular outer perimeter portions. Japanese reference 193944 includes square-shaped inner perimeter 7 and a circular outer perimeter. Japanese reference 193944 does not disclose or suggest Applicants amended and new claims.

No fees are believed due. If any additional fees or extensions of time are required, please charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1482.

Applicant respectfully submits that this case is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a teleconference will facilitate moving this case forward to being issued, Applicant's representative can be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully Submitted,

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